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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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10/542,122

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Jean-Michel Rouet

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07/21/2009

PHILIPS INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY & STANDARDS

P.O. BOX 3001

BRIARCLIFF MANOR, NY 10510

EXAMINER

PAPPAS, PETER

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

2628

MAIL DATE

DELIVERY MODE

07/21/2009

PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/542,122	Applicant(s) ROUET ET AL.	
	Examiner PETER-ANTHONY PAPPAS	Art Unit 2628	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 23 April 2009.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-11 and 13-17 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-11 and 13-17 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 12 July 2005 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Objections

1. Claim 1 is objected to because of the following informalities: "model" should not be capitalized (line 2). Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

2. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

3. Claims 1-3, 6, 10, 11, 13 and 17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Flórez-Valencia et al. (3D Graphical Models for Vascular-Stent Pose Simulation) in view of Dumoulin et al. (Mechanical Behaviour Modelling of Balloon-Expandable Stents) in view of Hernández-Hoyos et al. (Computer-assisted Analysis of Three-Dimensional MR Angiograms) in view of Montagnat et al. (A Hybrid Framework for Surface Registration and Deformable Models) and further in view of Yim et al. (Vessel Surface Reconstruction With a Tubular Deformable Model).
4. In regard to claim 1 Flórez-Valencia et al. teach: creating a deformable tubular mesh model (e.g., cylindrical stent mesh model; "...The stent model is also a cylindrical mesh..." – § 1, ¶ 3) for fitting a 3D path (e.g., $A_p(l_p)$ – parametric 3D curve representing the centerline of a stent; § 2, ¶ 1) based on a centerline (e.g., $A_v(l_v)$ – parametric 3D curve representing the centerline of a vessel; § 2, ¶ 1) of a 3D tubular object (e.g., vessel) of interest (§ 2, ¶s 2-3; Fig. 2), the 3D path comprising a set of ordered points

(e.g., vertices) defining a plurality of path segments (“...The discretized version of each centerline $A(l)$ is a set of vertices $\{a_i\}$...” – § 2, ¶ 1; “The surface is bound to the centerline: each surface vertex v_j is associated with the 3 closest centerline vertices $\{a_{i-1}, a_i, a_{i+1}\}$...” – § 3.2, ¶ 2; Fig. 5). It is noted that a portion of a centerline located between two respective centerline vertices is considered to read on a segment of a centerline (e.g., Fig. 5 is considered to illustrate at least two centerline segments).

Flórez-Valencia et al. teach the mesh model having an initial radius (“Fitting the stent to the vessel axial shape can then be seen as a process of sliding the predefined shape $C_p(l_p)$ along the centerline $A_v(l_v)$... mapping the axis $A_p(l_p)$ of the initial straight model of the stent onto the vessel centerline...” – § 2, ¶ 2). It is noted that a radius of said initial straight model of said stent is considered to read on an initial radius.

Flórez-Valencia et al. teach: the mesh model comprising a plurality of mesh segments corresponding to the plurality of path segments (“...Let $A_p(l_p)$ and $A_v(l_v)$ be parametric 3D curves representing the centerlines of the stent and of the vessel respectively ... The discretized version of each centerline $A(l)$ is a set of vertices $\{a_i\}$...” – § 2, ¶ 1); automatically adapting a length of a mesh radius of each mesh segment based on the corresponding path segment and the initial radius (“...Maracas accurately extracts centerline points $\{a_i\}$ and roughly estimates a set of radii $\{r_i\}$. This provides an initialization of the simplex-mesh model close to the vessel boundary and, together with the axial constraint, can be successfully used for 3D segmentation of the vessel...” – § 3.3, ¶ 1; “...The stent model is placed between l_{v0} and an end point at l_{vM} , with l_{v0} a user-defined delivery point and l_{vM} an end point automatically deduced (for a given

radius) from the length/radius relation that characterizes the stent-expansion process [5].” – § 2, ¶ 2).

It is noted that method taught by Flórez-Valencia et al. is reliant upon teachings disclosed in papers [5: Dumoulin et al. – pp. 1463-1465, § 3.1], [7: Hernández-Hoyos et al. – p. 425, col. 1, ¶ 3; p. 425, col. 2, ¶ 3; pp. 427, 428, § How Does it Work; p. 434, § Conclusions; Figs. 7-9], [8: Montagnat et al. – pp. 1043, 1044, § 3.1; pp. 1044-1046, § 5] and [16: Yim et al. – p. 1414, col. 1, ¶s 2-3; p. 1414, col. 1, ¶ 3; p. 1415, col. 1, ¶ 1; p. 1416, col. 1, ¶ 3; p. 1417, col. 1, ¶ 2; p. 1419, col. 2, ¶ 3; Fig. 4] which are directly referenced by Flórez-Valencia et al. (p. 2, ¶s 2, 3, 4; p. 3, ¶ 5). Specifically, Yim et al. teach automatically adapting a length of a mesh radius of each mesh segment based on a product of (e.g., consideration of) an initial radius and a shrinking factor (e.g., warping/truncation amount), the shrinking factor determined based on a radius of local curvature of the corresponding path segment (e.g., radius prior to warping/truncation; “A second feature of the tubular coordinate system, as mentioned in the previous section, is that the radii do not emanate in straight lines from the axis at all points. Rather, the radial lines are warped in areas where the vessel axis is curved. This warping prevents radial lines from adjacent axial locations from intersecting one another.” – p. 1414, col. 1, ¶ 2; “The radial lines are defined prior to the deformation process...” – p. 1414, col. 1, ¶ 3; “Condition for truncation of radial lines. Radial lines project outwards perpendicularly from the predefined axis of the tubular coordinate system. In certain cases the radial lines must be truncated to prevent intersections...” – p. 1414, Fig. 4; “The truncation point for each radial line is then defined as the point at which the radial

line leaves its own territory..." – p. 1415, col. 1, ¶ 1; p. 1417, col. 1, ¶ 2; Fig. 4). It is noted that the respective claim language fails to disclose what exactly constitutes "a product of," for example, an element A and an element B. It is further noted that the respective claim language fails to disclose what exactly constitutes a "shrinking factor."

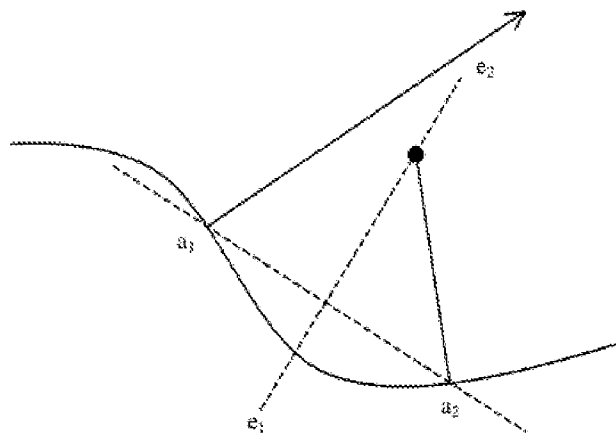


Fig. 4. Condition for truncation of radial lines. Radial lines project outwards perpendicularly from the predefined axis of the tubular coordinate system. In certain cases the radial lines must be truncated to prevent intersections. The condition for truncation is that a radial line leaves its "territory". In this diagram, the radial line from the axial position a_2 is truncated when it enters the territory of a_1 . The boundary between two territories is located at the line of equidistance between a_1 and a_2 (a_1a_2). Truncation of radial lines from nonadjacent axial positions (11) is shown.

It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art, at the time of the Applicant's invention, to incorporate the respective teachings of said papers (e.g., [5], [7], [8] and [16]) into the method taught by Flórez-Valencia et al., because Flórez-Valencia et al. explicitly state the use of said teachings to implement the method taught by Flórez-Valencia et al. and thus through such incorporation it would provide a means of rendering said method operable.

5. In regard to claim 2 Flórez-Valencia et al. teach creating a tubular structure for fitting the 3D path ("...The stent model is also a cylindrical mesh..." – § 1, ¶ 3) and mapping the tubular structure onto a 3D surface of the tubular object of interest

(mapping the axis $A_p(l_p)$ of the initial straight model of the stent onto the vessel centerline...” – § 2, ¶ 2; § 3.4, ¶ 1). However, Flórez-Valencia et al. fails to explicitly teach wherein the object of interest is represented in a gray level 3D image. It is implicitly taught by Flórez-Valencia et al. that color, at least to some degree, is utilized because both a given object of interest and a mesh are made visually apparent and are not invisible (Figs. 3, 4).

At the time the invention was made, it would have been an obvious matter of design choice to a person of ordinary skill in the art to color the object of interest in gray because Applicant has not disclosed that coloring the object of interest in gray provides an advantage, is used for a particular purpose, or solves a stated problem. One of ordinary skill in the art, furthermore, would have expected Applicant's invention to perform equally well with either the color used by Flórez-Valencia et al. or the claimed gray coloring because both colors perform the same function of visually identifying for a given user a given region for further processing. Therefore, it would have been an obvious matter of design choice to modify Flórez-Valencia et al. to obtain the invention as specified in claim 2.

6. In regard to claim 3 Flórez-Valencia et al. teach computing the 3D path that corresponds to the centerline of the tubular object of interest and defining the path segments on the 3D path (“...Let $A_p(l_p)$ and $A_v(l_v)$ be parametric 3D curves representing the centerlines of the stent and of the vessel respectively ... The discretized version of each centerline $A(l)$ is a set of vertices $\{a_i\}$...” – § 2, ¶ 1; “The surface is bound to the centerline: each surface vertex v_j is associated with the 3 closest centerline vertices

$\{a_{i-1}, a_i, a_{i+1}\} \dots$ ” – § 3.2, ¶ 2; Fig. 5). It is noted that a portion of a centerline located between two respective centerline vertices is considered to read on a segment of a centerline (e.g., Fig. 5 is considered to illustrate at least two centerline segments).

Flórez-Valencia et al. teach: creating an initial straight deformable cylindrical mesh model, of any kind of mesh, having a length along a longitudinal axis equal to a length of the 3D path (e.g., a length of said stent; “The initial model of the stent is constructed by placing predefined-shape contours $C_p(l_p)$, circular or polygonal, equally spaced along a straight axis...” – § 2, ¶ 2; Fig. 3); dividing the initial mesh model into segments of length corresponding to the path segments of the 3D path (“...Let $A_p(l_p)$ and $A_v(l_v)$ be parametric 3D curves representing the centerlines of the stent and of the vessel respectively ... The discretized version of each centerline $A(l)$ is a set of vertices $\{a_i\} \dots$ ” – § 2, ¶ 1; Figs. 3, 4); computing, for each mesh segment of the initial mesh model, a rigid-body transformation (“...one expects cylindrical structures with a high bending capability but for which deformations should preserve the generalized cylinder shape...” – § 3.2, ¶ 1) that transforms an initial direction of the mesh segment into a direction of the corresponding path segment of the 3D path, and applying the transformation to corresponding vertices of the mesh segment (§ 2, ¶ 2; § 3.2; § 3.4, ¶ 1; Figs. 3, 4).

7. In regard to claim 6 the rationale and motivation disclosed in the rejection of claim 1 is incorporated herein, specifically: Yim et al. – p. 1414, col. 1, ¶ 2; p. 1417, col. 1, ¶ 2; Fig. 4.

8. In regard to claim 10 it is noted that said claim invokes 35 U.S.C. 112 sixth paragraph. The rationale disclosed in the rejection of claim 1 is incorporated herein. Flórez-Valencia et al. teach a means for acquiring 3D medical image data of said 3D object of interest (“...The vascular lumen 3D image is first acquired using contrast-enhanced magnetic resonance angiography (MRA) technique [4]...” – § 1, ¶ 4). It is implicitly taught that said method, including said acquisition means, is implemented via a computer system, wherein said system includes a processor (e.g., circuit means) for executing respective computer instructions to perform said method as said method is directed toward the processing of 3D graphical models from 3D image data acquired via contrast-enhanced magnetic resonance angiography.

9. In regard to claim 11 Flórez-Valencia et al. teach “...The stent model is also a cylindrical mesh. Merging both meshes simulates artery stenting...” (§ 1; Fig. 1). It is noted that an artery is considered to read on an organ. The rationale disclosed in the rejection of claim 10 is incorporated herein.

10. In regard to claim 13 Flórez-Valencia et al. teach wherein the deformable tubular model is created with 2-simplex meshes (“...In 2-simplex meshes used to represent surfaces, each vertex has exactly three neighbors. 2-simplex meshes are topologically dual to triangulations, thus making conversions back and forth easy...” – § 3).

11. In regard to claim 17 the rationale disclosed in the rejection of claim 10 is incorporated herein. It is implicitly taught that said system comprises a computer readable medium for storing said instructions as said method would be unable to be

executed without instructions controlling said processor and for said instruction to exist they must be stored in some form of memory.

12. Claims 4, 5, 7-9, 14-16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Flórez-Valencia et al. (3D Graphical Models for Vascular-Stent Pose Simulation), Dumoulin et al. (Mechanical Behaviour Modelling of Balloon-Expandable Stents), Hernández-Hoyos et al. (Computer-assisted Analysis of Three-Dimensional MR Angiograms), Montagnat et al. (A Hybrid Framework for Surface Registration and Deformable Models) and Yim et al. (Vessel Surface Reconstruction With a Tubular Deformable Model), as applied to claims 1-3, 6, 10, 11, 13 and 17, in view of Williams et al. (Rational Discrete Generalized Cylinders and their Application to Shape Recovery in Medical Images).

13. In regard to claim 4 Flórez-Valencia et al. fail to teach blending (e.g., linearly interpolating) the rigid-body transformations of consecutive mesh segments. Williams et al. teach the use of interpolation between two consecutive segments (e.g., cross sections) in a rational discrete generalized cylinder (pp. 389, 390, § 4; p. 390, § 5.1, p. 391, § 6; Fig. 4). It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art, at the time of the Applicant's invention, to incorporate the teachings of Williams et al. into the method taught by Flórez-Valencia et al., because through such incorporation it would provide a means of minimizing distortion (e.g., twist) of said cylinder thus resulting in a more continuous model.

14. In regard to claim 5 Flórez-Valencia et al. fail to teach wherein a linear interpolation is used between rotations of consecutive mesh segments (e.g., family of

rotations) for blending the 3D rigid body transformation to limit self-intersection between bent (e.g., twisted) portions of the deformable tubular mesh model. Williams et al. teach wherein a linear interpolation is used between a family of rotations to limit self-intersection between twisted portions of the deformable tubular mesh model (pp. 390, 391, § 5.2; p. 391, § 6; Fig. 4). The rationale and motivation disclosed in the rejection of claim 4 is incorporated herein.

15. In regard to claim 7 Flórez-Valencia et al. implicitly teach wherein said method involves approximation, specifically approximation of local curvature, as said method is directed towards a simulation and a simulation is not considered able to flawlessly mirror reality (e.g., a simulation, no matter how good, can only account for so much). However, Flórez-Valencia et al. fail to teach applying a radius modulation technique via linear blending (linear interpolation) from one radius (segment) to another. Williams et al. teach the use of interpolation between two consecutive segments (e.g., cross sections) in a rational discrete generalized cylinder (pp. 389, 390, § 4; p. 390, § 5.1, p. 391, § 6; Fig. 4). It is noted that each section of said cylinder defined by a respective radius is considered to read on a segment. The motivation disclosed in the rejection of claim 4 is incorporated herein.

16. In regard to claim 8 Flórez-Valencia et al. teach that "...one expects cylindrical structures with a high bending capability but for which deformations should preserve the generalized cylinder shape..." (§ 3.2, ¶ 1). However, Flórez-Valencia et al. fail to explicitly teach computing a minimal 3D rotation from an initial mesh direction to a target segment. Williams et al. teach computing the minimal 3D rotation from the initial mesh

direction to a target segment (pp. 389-390, § 4; p. 390, § 5.1, 5.2, p. 391, § 6; Fig. 4). It is noted that computing the minimal 3D rotation from an initial mesh direction to a target segment is considered to read on minimizing mesh torsion. The motivation disclosed in the rejection of claim 4 is incorporated herein.

17. In regard to claim 9 Flórez-Valencia et al. fail to explicitly teach: defining rotations between segments using an axis parameter and a rotation angle parameter; computing the parameters iteratively between adjacent segments so that a new rotation for a current segment comprises a composition of a found rotation for a previous segment and the minimal rotation from the previous segment to the current segment. The rationale and motivation disclosed in the rejection of claim 8 is incorporated herein, specifically: Williams et al. – pp. 389, 390, § 4; p. 390, § 5.1, 5.2, p. 391, § 6; Fig. 4. It is noted that the iterative processing of a family of rotations, as disclosed by Williams et al., implicitly teach that a rotation performed after a previous rotation in said family of rotations will be, at least to some degree, dependent upon the previous rotation.

18. In regard to claim 14 the rationale disclosed in the rejections of claims 1 and 3-5 are incorporated herein.

19. In regard to claim 15 the rationale disclosed in the rejection of claim 7 is incorporated herein.

20. In regard to claim 16 the rationale disclosed in the rejection of claim 6 is incorporated herein. It is noted that a diameter for said model is consider equal to two times the respective radius and that a change in the radius is considered to result in a change, at least to some degree, in the diameter.

Response to Arguments

21. The prior Double Patenting rejection has been withdrawn in light of the approved Terminal Disclaimer.

22. The prior objection to the specification has been withdrawn after further consideration.

23. The prior 35 U.S.C. 112 first paragraph rejection has been withdrawn after further consideration.

24. In response to Applicant's remarks that Yim et al. fail to disclose or teach that the mesh radius is adapted "based on a product of the initial radius and a shrinking factor" or that that "the shrinking factor is determined based on the initial radius and a radius of local curvature of the corresponding path segment" it is noted that one cannot show nonobviousness by attacking references individually where the rejections are based on combinations of references. See *In re Keller*, 642 F.2d 413, 208 USPQ 871 (CCPA 1981); *In re Merck & Co.*, 800 F.2d 1091, 231 USPQ 375 (Fed. Cir. 1986).

As previously disclosed above Flórez-Valencia et al. teach automatically adapting a length of a mesh radius of each mesh segment based on the corresponding path segment and the initial radius ("...Maracas accurately extracts centerline points $\{a_i\}$ and roughly estimates a set of radii $\{r_i\}$. This provides an initialization of the simplex-mesh model close to the vessel boundary and, together with the axial constraint, can be successfully used for 3D segmentation of the vessel..." – § 3.3, ¶ 1; "...The stent model is placed between l_{v0} and an end point at l_{vM} , with l_{v0} a user-defined delivery point and l_{vM} an end point automatically deduced (for a given radius) from the length/radius

relation that characterizes the stent-expansion process [5].” – § 2, ¶ 2). As previously disclosed above it is noted that a radius of said initial straight model of said stent is considered to read on an initial radius. As previously disclosed above Yim et al. teach automatically adapting a length of a mesh radius of each mesh segment based on a product of (e.g., consideration of) an initial radius and a shrinking factor (e.g., warping/truncation amount), the shrinking factor determined based on a radius of local curvature of the corresponding path segment (e.g., radius prior to warping/truncation; “A second feature of the tubular coordinate system, as mentioned in the previous section, is that the radii do not emanate in straight lines from the axis at all points. Rather, the radial lines are warped in areas where the vessel axis is curved. This warping prevents radial lines from adjacent axial locations from intersecting one another.” – p. 1414, col. 1, ¶ 2; “The radial lines are defined prior to the deformation process...” – p. 1414, col. 1, ¶ 3; “Condition for truncation of radial lines. Radial lines project outwards perpendicularly from the predefined axis of the tubular coordinate system. In certain cases the radial lines must be truncated to prevent intersections...” – p. 1414, Fig. 4; “The truncation point for each radial line is then defined as the point at which the radial line leaves its own territory...” – p. 1415, col. 1, ¶ 1; p. 1417, col. 1, ¶ 2; Fig. 4). It is noted that the respective claim language fails to disclose what exactly constitutes “a product of,” for example, an element A and an element B. It is further noted that the respective claim language fails to disclose what exactly constitutes a “shrinking factor.” The Applicant is directed to the respective above rejection.

25. In response to Applicant's remarks in regard to instant amended claim language the Applicant is directed to the respective above rejections which have been clarified to address said remarks.

26. Applicant's remarks have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

Conclusion

27. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to PETER-ANTHONY PAPPAS whose telephone number is (571) 272-7646. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 9:00AM-5:30PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Ulka Chauhan can be reached on 571-272-7761. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Peter-Anthony Pappas/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 2628